

# [***Bill shelved that sought changes to Iowa law outlining penalties for terminating a pregnancy***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BJF-BHT1-JC5B-G422-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

DES MOINES, Iowa — A bill that would have made changes to Iowa's fetal homicide law has been shelved after a Senate Republican joined Democrats in voicing concerns about the potential impact on [*in vitro fertilization*](https://apnews.com/article/ivf-frozen-embryo-alabama-court-7c968cc00201731d7baba5a284655b0d) after an [*Alabama court*](https://apnews.com/article/alabama-supreme-court-from-embryos-161390f0758b04a7638e2ddea20df7ca) found frozen embryos can be considered children.

The Senate declined to consider the bill, which was approved by the House last week.

Iowa’s law currently outlines penalties for terminating or seriously injuring a “human pregnancy.” The bill would have changed that language to be about the death of, or serious injury to, an “unborn person” from fertilization to live birth.

The bill in Iowa was one of many being considered by state Legislatures around the country that would [*expand legal and constitutional protections*](https://apnews.com/article/embryos-ivf-abortion-personhood-laws-ffe4f4d326469a97fef999254ca86eea) for embryos and fetuses, a long-time goal of the anti-abortion movement.

In explaining the bill before the vote, Iowa Republican Rep. Skyler Wheeler said it “simply changes the words" of the law. But Democrats raised a recent Alabama case, warning that the proposed language would apply to embryos and therefore pose a risk to the procedure that [*helps some women*](https://apnews.com/article/ivf-alabama-over-35-cancer-lupus-sickle-cell-8a6e653c79511fc39bbb7c2267941e7a) become pregnant.

Republican Sen. Brad Zaun, who leads the Senate judiciary committee, did not assign the bill to a subcommittee because he was concerned about the “unintended consequences” for IVF, he told reporters.

After the Senate rejected the bill, the chair of the House judiciary committee, Rep. Steven Holt, said they did not believe IVF was at risk because of differences in Iowa and Alabama's constitutions. Still, Holt said, he understood the concerns and said it's “certainly a discussion we’ve got to have before we would move it on" in the future.

The majority ruling of Alabama’s Supreme Court treated an embryo the same as a child or gestating fetus under the state’s wrongful death law, explicitly stating “unborn children are ‘children.’” That led three major providers of IVF in Alabama to pause services because of concerns about liabilities.

[*Alabama's elected officials*](https://apnews.com/article/alabama-ivf-frozen-embryos-ruling-cab8171e80c88a088778dc7a187b7b5a) have since [*moved to clarify*](https://apnews.com/article/alabama-ivf-clinic-lawsuit-immunity-things-know-0d16d3be139f42c96bc3ab35c4467f55) that IVF providers are protected from liability related to the destruction of or damage to an embryo.

Democratic Rep. Jennifer Konfrst criticized House Republicans for the initial denial that IVF was at stake, which Democrats had warned before it passed.

“They got caught running a bill that did more than they said. They mocked us when we said it did that. And then other Republicans pulled the bill because it did just what we said,” Konfrst told reporters Thursday. “That is ***politics*** at its worst.”

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